

Minutes of the Meeting of the Vestry of the Chapel of the Cross

August 17, 2023

The Vestry of the Chapel of the Cross met in the Overlook Room and via Zoom on Thursday, August 17, 2023. The following Vestry members were present: Jessica Aylor, Brian Coggins, Woody Coley, Anita Howell, Katherine Lavine, Caren Parker, Gail Perry (Zoom), Roman Perun (Senior Warden), Alan Rimer (Zoom), Brad Ross, and Faith Turchi.

The following clergy were present: The Rev. Elizabeth Marie Melchionna (Rector), The Rev. Mary Catherine Young (Associate Rector for University Ministry), The Rev. Keith Esposito (Curate), and The Rev. Dr. Karen Connor McGugan (Curate for Family and Youth).

Also present were Diane McOmie (Parish Administrator and Stewardship Manager), Sabrina Olsen (Treasurer), and Alice Cotten (Clerk).

The Rector presided and called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Devotion and prayer

Katherine Lavine selected and led two “call and response” prayers from the BCP, one from Evening prayer (“A,” p.121-22) and one from Prayers of the People, Form VI (p. 392-93). She commented that these prayers allowed all present to participate and were favorites from her childhood.

Approval of Consent Agenda

The following items were placed on the Consent Agenda (attached):

Minutes from the July 2023 Vestry Meeting
Vestry Summary – July 2023 Vestry Meeting
Rector’s report
Campus Ministry Associate Rector’s report
Curate’s report
Housing Resolution: The Rev. Dr. Karen Connor McGugan
Christian Formation report
Parish Life & Worship report
Communications report
Music report
Faith in Action report
Finance Committee meeting minutes - July
Stewardship Committee meeting minutes - August

Sr. Warden Roman Perun moved approval of the Consent Agenda, and Brad Ross seconded. **The Consent Agenda was approved unanimously.**

Rector's Update (attached)

The Rev. Elizabeth Marie Melchionna said how right it felt to be back after her sabbatical. She welcomed the Rev. Dr. Karen Connor McGugan, the newest staff member, who will focus on Family and Youth. She noted how fortunate we are to have Dr. McGugan on staff. Dr. McGugan introduced herself and said she felt welcomed by everyone she had met at the parish.

Ms. Melchionna spoke briefly of her sabbatical, the first in her seventeen years of ministry. She said she realized that she was tired, and that the sabbatical was a gift of time to reconnect with friends and with God and to experience new ways of parenting, to go on retreat and on a parish mission trip, to read, and to try new things (playing the harp!). She thanked everyone for stepping up and making it appear that keeping things running smoothly was easy. Speaking of the parish mission trip to Ecuador, she remarked that the parish supports some phenomenal missionaries and asked for prayers for Ecuador's presidential elections.

The Rector invited other clergy to speak if they wanted to add to their written reports. The Rev. Mary Cat Young said she had written previously about the quality of staff at COTC (see her June Vestry report) and noted that the Rev. Geoffrey Hoare also mentioned the excellence of the staff in his remarks at the July Vestry meeting. Our parish is fortunate to have such dedicated people.

Standing Committee Updates

Finance (attached): Finance Chair Brad Ross asked Treasurer Sabrina Olsen to review parish finances. Ms. Olsen reported that the picture was similar to last month. Expenses exceeded revenues by about \$68K through July, mostly because of a lag in parishioner contributions. There was an increase in pledges this year over last. Expenses are ahead of last year, as expected. We typically get substantial revenues at the end of the year. Assets have grown, but that will not continue as we begin spending for committed projects such as the organ. There has been some recovery on market value of investments. The balance of uncommitted funds in the Capital Fund is \$303,450. Ms. Olsen pointed out that the Organ Cash Flow Summary does not include the Vestry-approved additional \$200K spending threshold. We still need \$400K to pay for the organ project. She said that the project will need to go back to the Finance Committee in October to see how much the parish needs to borrow.

Mr. Ross thanked Ms. Olsen for her report and noted that she had highlighted the need for additional money for the organ project. There have been two large undesignated gifts to the parish from now-deceased parishioners, one for \$100K, and one for \$54K. He reported that the Finance Committee recommended putting all \$154K toward the organ. There was a short discussion about whether 10% of the total of the two gifts should be put into the Capital Fund and 90% into the Organ Fund. The discussion ended with general agreement that the most prudent financial option was to put all the \$154K into the organ project in order to reduce borrowing costs. **Mr. Ross moved that the Vestry accept the recommendation of the Finance Committee to allocate to the Organ Fund all \$154K from the Jones and Hillerd gifts. Mr. Perun seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously, with no abstentions.**

Next Ms. Olsen discussed the “**Draft Audit**” for December 31, 2022 and 2021. She stated that the Audit Committee had met and reported to the Finance Committee. Ms. Olsen explained that there were no problems with the audit. The term “qualified opinion” was used for the past four years because the accounting profession changed its guidelines. Mr. Ross noted that Ms. Olsen was being modest, that the auditors recognized her competence, and he wanted to do so also. The reason for the qualified opinion, he continued, was associated with all the separate funds. Michael Hardy is leading a parish committee trying to untangle these separate funds and give them a clearer designation. Ms. Olsen added that donor-restricted and Vestry-designated funds will be separated. Mr. Perun commented that Note H in the audit (pp. 49-56 in v.2 of the vestry packet) is a great source of information about the various restricted funds.

Mr. Ross moved that the Vestry follow the recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committees to accept the audit. Jess Aylor seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously, with no abstentions.

Mr. Ross concluded his report by saying that the Investment Committee has been dormant but is revitalizing.

Stewardship (attached)

Stewardship Co-Chair Gail Perry reported that the *Annual Fund campaign goal* of \$1,830,000, an increase of 11%, is substantial, especially with the current organ project; and that the Stewardship Committee has been working hard to plan ways to reach the goal. Mr. Perun pointed out that some items in the budget, such as the diocesan give, are outside the parish’s control.

Co-Chair Katherine Lavine noted that the Stewardship Committee is also *revising its charter* to reflect more accurately the scope of the committee, which works with the Finance Committee and others to coordinate the timing, scope, and marketing of parish fundraising initiatives. Ms. Lavine emphasized that the Stewardship Committee should be involved before asking parishioners for money. Mr. Ross drew attention to the two-page infographic (*attached*) illustrating the steps involved in various sizes of projects ranging from under \$3K to over \$250K. The Rector asked that the Stewardship Committee send any revision of its charter to Diane McOmie, Parish Administrator and Stewardship Manager.

Building & Grounds

Faith Turchi, Chair of Buildings & Grounds, reported that one compressor of five is not working, hence the less than cool building temperature recently. It is a necessary repair, not only for cooling purposes, but also because of extra wear and tear it causes on the four working compressors. We have received two bids (*attached*), one from Latta (\$19,500), and one from Dual Comfort (\$22,679.82). The Finance and the Building & Grounds committees recommended accepting the Latta bid. **Brian Coggins moved that the Vestry accept the recommendation of the Finance and the Building & Grounds committees and enter into a contract with Latta’s**

Heating and Air Conditioning Services for replacing the A1 compressor. Alan Rimer seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously, with no abstentions.

Others, as Needed

Anita Howell encouraged Vestry members to provide leadership in *encouraging composting* by helping parishioners learn the appropriate way to dispose of leftover food, paper napkins and towels, and single use plates and cups at parish events including food and beverages. She distributed handouts with information about composting and encouraged everyone to help others who have questions about what goes in which container.

Closing Prayer and Adjourn

Dr. Karen McGugan offered a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice R. Cotten
Clerk of the Vestry

The next meeting of the Vestry of The Chapel of the Cross will be on Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.